IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING NOTES

April 5, 2000, 9:00 a.m.-4 p.m.

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE OFFICES
PORTLAND, OREGON

I. Greetings, Introductions and Review of the Agenda.

The April 5, 2000 meeting of the Implementation Team, held at the National Marine Fisheries Service's offices in Portland, Oregon, was chaired by Brian Brown of NMFS and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. The agenda for the April 5 meeting and a list of attendees are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced in the body of the text may be too lengthy to attach; all enclosures referenced are available upon request from NMFS's Kathy Ceballos at 503/230-5420 or via email at kathy.ceballos@noaa.gov.

Brown and Silverberg welcomed everyone to the meeting, led a round of introductions and a review of the agenda.

II. Updates.

A. In-Season Management. The Corps' Cindy Henriksen reported that the April early bird water supply forecast is now available; it is similar to the March final forecast, in that it shows a slightly above-average water supply at Grand Coulee (65.5 MAF, 104% of normal). At Lower Granite, the April-July forecast is now 19.7 MAF, 91% of average. At The Dalles, the January-July forecast is unchanged – 105 MAF, 99% of average. The April final forecast should be available around April 10, Henriksen said.

The Corps has begun to produce its weekly TMT spreadsheets, Henriksen continued; she provided copies of the second spreadsheet of the year (Enclosure C). What it shows, in terms of

current operations, is that the headwater storage projects are drafting to meet their April 30 flood control elevations; those projects will then refill by the end of June. Based on the most recent forecasts, the spring flow objective at Lower Granite is 100 Kcfs; this spreadsheet demonstrates an average flow of 109 Kcfs during that period, said Henriksen. The spring objective at Priest Rapids Dam is 135 Kcfs, while, under this spreadsheet scenario, the forecast flow is actually 140 Kcfs. At McNary, the spring target is 200 Kcfs; again, based on this scenario and the runoff forecast, we could see an actual average flow of closer to 257 Kcfs at that project, Henriksen said.

Moving on to the various planning processes underway at TMT, Henriksen said the Corps has implemented a flood control shift, for the first time since the 1995 Biological Opinion was put in place; under the shift, Dworshak was left fuller than normal at the end of March, while Grand Coulee was drafted slightly to compensate. The shift was implemented at the behest of the salmon managers, Henriksen said. With respect to the 2000 Water Management Plan, Henriksen said final comments are due at tomorrow's TMT meeting; the group hopes to finalize this document at its April 13 meeting. The 2000 plan will include a new section covering operations during the fall, winter and early spring periods, in addition to the traditional sections on the spring and summer in-season management periods.

With respect to the TMT Guidelines, Henriksen said this document has been changed to reflect the fact that the TMT's weekly meetings will now be held on Thursday morning, rather than Wednesday afternoon. Again, she said, we hope to finalize the Guidelines at the April 13 TMT meeting, and hope to be able to present the final versions of both the Water Management Plan and the Guidelines at the May IT meeting. Henriksen also touched briefly on the status of the goals and objectives appendix to the Water Management Plan; that document will be one of the focuses of tomorrow's TMT meeting.

Any idea when the spill program will begin at the Snake River projects? Brown asked. We started to spill last night at Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental, in response to an SOR received yesterday afternoon, Henriksen replied. We spilled the entire river – about 80 Kcfs – last night at Ice Harbor, and saw downstream TDG readings in the 116% range. At Lower Monumental, we spilled 30 Kcfs last night, and saw TDG readings of about 110%; we will be increasing spill at that project to 40 Kcfs tonight, she said. Jim Nielsen noted that fish passage indices are still low at Little Goose and Lower Granite dams; once those indices begin to pick up, the salmon managers will be requesting spill at those projects as well. Henriksen added that Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental are now at minimum operating pool; Lower Granite should be at MOP later today. In addition, said Henriksen, Dworshak is spilling today; the Corps is releasing 13 Kcfs from that project in an effort to achieve its April 30 flood control elevation of 1516 feet, so Snake River flows are rising.

Nielsen then distributed Enclosure D, the March 31 letter from the Nez Perce Tribe to NMFS and the Corps regarding the short-term activity exemption of the TDG standard below Dworshak. In the past, he said, this has been a relatively routine activity, although the debate over how to use Dworshak storage has been a contentious one every year. Nielsen said he is concerned about the

status of the 2000 waiver, because of the conditions attached to the waiver for the first time this year (see Enclosure D for details). Basically, these conditions would require the Corps and NMFS to implement the "Idaho Plan," under which Dworshak would be kept full through July 31, and would be drafted to no lower than 1537 feet on August 31.

In 1996, the salmon managers agreed to go along with a similar plan, again proposed by the State of Idaho, said Nielsen; frankly, the results were quite unsatisfactory, to put it mildly. Water temperatures at Lower Granite were elevated, a condition that could have been at least partially alleviated by initiating the drafting of Dworshak sooner, in July. Every year since then, we've battled over when it is appropriate to begin drafting Dworshak for temperature control, Nielsen said. Another related issue is the need for September flows from Dworshak to enhance adult passage conditions; again, this issue was the subject of considerable debate last year. There have been numerous requests, made primarily to CRITFC, for supporting data that would show the need for that type of supplementation. NMFS considered, then rejected, a similar operation when it developed the 1995 BiOp, said Nielsen; they concluded, rightfully I believe, that the data does not support such an operation – the cool water from Dworshak conveys greater biological benefit when used on the subyearling migrants in July and August.

With all of that in mind, said Nielsen, I'm curious about the status of the waiver discussions between NMFS, the State of Idaho and the Nez Perce Tribe; I would also like to say, for the record, that the State of Washington does not support the conditions the current waiver seeks to impose. We believe that drafting Dworshak beginning in early July makes more sense, from a biological perspective.

I'm also puzzled, said Nielsen, because, in order to implement the 2000 flood control shift, a waiver will be necessary; this is somewhat disturbing to Washington, because we agreed to the flood control shift with the understanding that, despite the fact that it would have an adverse effect on flows at Priest Rapids, it would improve fish passage conditions in the Snake and Clearwater Rivers.

Henriksen said that, when the Corps agreed to and implemented the flood control shift between Dworshak and Grand Coulee, it was with the understanding that the Corps hoped to avoid exceedence of the 110% TDG standard. The amount that was shifted was based on the volume the Corps felt could be drafted without exceeding that standard. In other words, said Henriksen, there was some risk to the Corps' flood control operation, but it was a risk the Corps decided to take. We still hope to be able to achieve elevation 1516 at Dworshak on April 30, without exceeding 110% TDG downstream from that project.

What is the volume of the shift? Jim Ruff asked. About 60 Ksfd, Henriksen replied. In response to a question, Brown noted that he had championed the 1996 Idaho plan, and had helped convince the other salmon managers that it was a good idea; subsequently, what I learned was similar to what Jim learned, Brown said – if you don't get out in front of the temperature increases in the Snake, you lose the battle. To me, he said, 1996 was a clear illustration of why Dworshak needs to

begin drafting sooner than July 31.

Boyce said Oregon joins NMFS and Washington in objecting to the Idaho and Nez Perce conditions for granting the 2000 waiver – what the survival data clearly shows is that 1996, when water temperatures reached 72 degrees F. at Lower Granite, was one of the worst years on record. We also have information that shows that adult survival is compromised by such an operation, said Boyce. You have to release the cool water from Dworshak early if it is to have a significant effect in August and in September as well.

In reply to Nielsen's question about the status of the waiver negotiations, Brown said NMFS is in the process of conveying its disappointment to the State of Idaho and the Nez Perce Tribe about the way the waiver request response was handled. We have seen these conditions before, said Brown; we met with Idaho and the Nez Perce in March, and have another meeting scheduled for tomorrow. We're interested in resolving this issue in a mutually-satisfactory way, Brown said, but these conditions are simply not acceptable to NMFS. Our advice to the Corps is that they do everything they can to draft Dworshak now, and attempt to meet their April 30 flood control target at Dworshak without violating the 110% TDG standard, because, from NMFS' perspective, there is no waiver for the Clearwater.

Both Boyce and Dan Daley said that, in line with the Idaho and Nez Perce stipulation that all Dworshak releases must be supported by scientifically defensible water quality and fish migration studies and data, they would be interested in seeing the scientific justification for the operations imposed by the waiver conditions. Basically, said Daley, I would be curious to know specifically why they think this is a better operation, biologically.

Ruff asked whether the lack of a waiver could affect the April flows shown in the current TMT spreadsheet. It may, Henriksen replied – we don't have a final April water supply forecast yet, but anticipating that we will need to continue to move water out of Dworshak in April, we have already increased outflow from that project. Basically, we're waiting to see what Mother Nature gives us, she said. However, the upshot of this situation is that the Corps is having to release more water now, in early April, rather than later in April, when more fish will be present, Ruff observed.

In response to a suggestion from Daley, Brown asked Oregon and Washington to work with NMFS in developing a written summary of the physical and biological lessons learned from the 1996 Dworshak operation. Nielsen noted that FPAC has been discussing the adult migration issue; our conclusion is that the available information shows that releasing the Dworshak storage in July and August, rather than in September, has a more beneficial effect on conversion rates at Ice Harbor and Lower Granite. That was NMFS' conclusion as well, said Brown.

In terms of action on this item, said Silverberg, it sounds as though NMFS will continue to discuss this issue with the State of Idaho and the Nez Perce Tribe, will raise the concerns that have been expressed at today's meeting, will request the scientific justification underlying the waiver

conditions, and will work with Oregon and Washington to develop a more complete summary of what happened in 1996.

One final comment, said Ruff, with respect to the TMT process – we have heard loud and clear, from both Idaho and the Nez Perce, that they feel disenfranchised from the TMT process. They feel that their input is not being heard, and point to last year's operation for adult migration and temperature control in September as a case in point. Ruff asked that, in its discussion of the Guidelines, the TMT consider any ideas that might help bring the state and the tribe into the process, so that everyone is at the same table, working together on these issues. Boyce replied that the TMT's door is always open to both the states and the tribes; we did carefully consider their input and requests last season, he said, however much they may have disliked the outcome of those discussions. Ruff added that Idaho and the Nez Perce have proposed that the TMT hold its July 6 meeting in Lewiston, to talk about summer flow augmentation issues. I'll make sure that's conveyed to the TMT, said Silverberg.

B. Plan for Analyzing and Testing Hypotheses (PATH). No PATH update was presented at today's meeting.

C. Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB). No ISAB update was presented at today's meeting.

D. Water Quality Team (WQT). Brown distributed Enclosure E, a memo from Mark Schneider and Rich Domingue regarding the Snake River water temperature plan. The bottom line is that, while FPAC, WQT and TMT all felt that temperature monitoring is a good idea, there was no support in any of those bodies for any specific changes to the existing water temperature monitoring program. He asked that anyone with further interest in this issue contact him or John Palensky, and they will ask Schneider to prepare a presentation for the May IT meeting.

Michael Newsom observed that, in light of the just-completed discussion of the Dworshak waiver issue, it might make sense to try to engage Idaho and the Nez Perce on this temperature monitoring plan, and to ask them to help find the necessary funding and to take an active role in setting up additional temperature monitoring in the Lower Snake.

Jim Athearn noted that, a couple of meetings ago, the IT discussed notification protocols between WQT and TMT during TDG monitoring emergencies; the TMT and WQT chairs have now agreed that, in the event such an emergency occurs, Cindy Henriksen will notify Mark Schneider and Mary Lou Soscia, the WQT co-chairs, who will then notify the WQT membership if necessary. Athearn said Henriksen, Schneider and Soscia will be sending a memo to Brian Brown, explaining the agreement that has been reached.

E. System Configuration Team (SCT). No SCT update was presented at today's meeting.

F. Quantitative Analytical Report (QAR). See Agenda Item III, below.

G. Federal Caucus and Framework Hydro Developments. No update was presented on this topic at today's meeting.

III. Draft Mid-Columbia QAR Report – Extinction Risk Assessment.

Tom Cooney briefed the IT on the contents of the Upper Columbia QAR report, "Run Reconstructions and Preliminary Assessment of Extinction Risks." He worked from a series of overheads, Enclosure F; please refer to this document for details of Cooney's presentation. Among the highlights:

The basic questions asked in this analysis include:

- What are the relative extinction risks for major populations within the listed Upper Columbia River ESUs?
- How would those risks be affected by increases in spawner to spawner survival?
- How would achieving HCP survival objectives contribute to reducing extinction risk?
- What level of survival improvement beyond the HCP objectives would be required to meet possible extinction/recovery criteria?

Cooney touched on the basis for these population analyses, spring chinook and steelhead historical returns per spawner, Upper Columbia steelhead dam counts, by year, spawning escapement, hatchery releases, harvest, and summer run survival patterns, as well as the models used in the analysis. He provided the following conclusions for the three Upper Columbia spring chinook runs:

- The three runs are closely correlated – they all go up and down together, with a 70%-75% correlation coefficient.
- Return rates peaked in the 1960s, with another peak in the early 1980s.
- Return rates have declined to very low levels since FY'83.
- The trend in recent years is positive, but return rates and returns are still relatively low.

With respect to extinction risk for these stocks, the report says the risks are:

< High – the level is a function of what assumptions are made about the future
< Very high, if future survivals continue like the levels since 1980, or worsen
< Lower, if future survivals are more like the longer-term series (highs and lows)

With respect to next steps, Cooney said the draft report is currently undergoing internal review; once that review is completed, the report will be revised in response to comments received and

distributed for regional review. We had hoped that would occur on April 1, he said; however, we're running a few weeks behind. In addition, he said, we would like to add more

detail to the evaluation of supplementation, hatchery effects (steelhead focus), harvest strategies and habitat potential.

What kinds of things will you be looking at, in terms of assessing the potential effectiveness of supplementation in the FCRPS? Boyce asked. There is a proposal for supplementation underway, Cooney replied. I think what we'd like to do is start with that, and approach it in two or three tiers. The first tier would be to lay out the specifics -- broodstocking, assumptions about survival rates in the hatchery, observed survivals and return rates for spring chinook. We need to figure out whether that system would work in combination with natural production, given the variability we see in return rates. Could supplementation succeed if there was no difference in the genetics of the progeny? Then, if this regional look at supplementation produces more information, we would be in a position to take advantage of that, Cooney said. We probably won't try to do some kind of detailed statistical analysis of that component; instead, I think we'll focus more on the nuts and bolts of the system. We may also want to design some experiments in the Upper Columbia aimed at assessing the effectiveness of supplementation.

I guess the take-home message from your presentation, to me, is that the survival improvements needed for supplementation to recover the Upper Columbia stocks are vast, said Boyce. That's a little misleading, Cooney replied – they're vast compared to the task before you, if you have to change survival at a given life-stage. I've run some simple supplementation models, he said, and on paper, you can keep a stock going with supplementation, even if conditions continue as they've been since 1980. It's a big step to that assumption, Boyce observed. No, that's making reasonable assumptions, based on recent average return rates, Cooney replied – there is a big advantage to spawning fish in the hatchery, in terms of smolts produced per spawner. You get 100 smolts per spawner in the wild; you get 1,600 smolts per spawner in the hatchery, in the Upper Columbia. The trick is how to ensure that their progeny become effective spawners, Cooney said.

Daley observed that, if you look at the West Coast salmon runs in the aggregate, many are now listed; these populations have some things in common, and other things they don't have in common. The Columbia Basin stocks have a hydrosystem in common, but that doesn't explain why coastal stocks are being listed from California to Washington, Daley said. There are some commonalities, certainly, between the coastal stocks and the Columbia Basin stocks; deteriorating habitat, for one, and hatchery influence, for another. Personally, said Daley, I don't think you can assume that supplementation is the answer for all of the Columbia Basin stocks – it may work in the Entiat, for example, but it may not work in, say, the Wenatchee.

There has been some discussion about using supplementation on the Upper Columbia stocks, in the short-term, said Cooney. However, what this analysis is all about is trying to identify the conditions

we're trying to create in the longer term. Supplementation may be part of the picture, in terms of keeping these stocks around; however, ESA requires you to look for longer-term solutions which will promote self-sustaining stocks. We may be able to create those conditions, and then decide to continue to supplement, for mitigation purposes – that's a policy call. This particular analysis, however, is trying to get at extinction risk, said Cooney.

How does the QAR process fit into the HCP and BiOp processes? Jim Litchfield asked. The QAR is an analysis that is available to the people working on HCP and the BiOp, Cooney replied. Has the HCP been approved? Litchfield asked. No, Brown replied – we're working on a draft EIS that is due for release in June; that draft EIS, and our notice of application for the Section 10 permit, will come out concurrently. And the QAR work will become a part of the draft EIS? Litchfield asked. We haven't yet decided, Brown replied, because this report has just become available. In, part, the QAR schedule will determine how much of this work is included in the draft EIS.

You mentioned that you're running a few weeks behind schedule, said Brown – could you be more specific about where you are, and what the next steps need to be? The earliest we could make the draft report available for regional review is April 17, said Cooney – we have a conference call on Friday, at which we'll make that decision. Most likely, he said, the analysis will be released some time around April 20.

IV. Discussion of Draft Performance Measures Report.

Chris Toole distributed the March 24 draft of the report "ESA Consultation on the FCRPS: Distribution of Updated Transmission System Information and Draft Performance Standards" (Enclosure G). Several weeks ago, said Toole, we sent out this report to the states and tribes, with a cover letter requesting that any comments be provided by today's meeting. Our goal is to produce another draft of this report within a week or so; for that reason, we need to be sure we receive comments from all of the relevant parties very soon.

Toole noted that, in the Biological Assessment submitted by the Corps, Reclamation and BPA, they made a proposal for setting performance standards for both interim goals for the hydrosystem, and for monitoring progress toward those goals. This paper describes a potential approach to evaluating the performance of the hydrosystem in the context of population requirements. However, he said, because it may not be possible to apply this approach to all of the listed populations, due to data and analytical limitations, the draft also includes five alternative methods for setting hydrosystem performance standards. Toole noted that, for the purposes of this report, a performance measure is defined as some characteristic that would indicate the effect of an action – survival rate, temperature etc.

Toole spent a few minutes going through the main components of the draft performance measures paper (please see Enclosure G for details). Toole touched on potential transmission impacts

due to changes in FCRPS operations, population-level performance measures, life history stage-specific performance measures, performance measures for human activities, practical considerations, monitoring and evaluation, some provisional performance measures and standards for hydrosystem activities, and the debate over a top-down versus a bottom-up approach.

Toole noted that NMFS is advocating a top-down approach; the most important next step in this process is to develop the techniques and analyses presented in Section III of the report for all ESUs. However, you're not going to be able to do that for all eight ESUs by May 22, Boyce observed. We're trying, Toole replied.

Other next steps in the process include:

- Develop analytical techniques capable of assessing risk as a function of changes in survival in the life-stages influenced by human activity
- If possible, determine for each life stage the distribution of natural and human-caused mortality/ This equates roughly to the first step of the "feasibility"analysis called for by CRI. This will be an imperfect process, as our attempt to apply this process to life stages influenced by the federal hydrosystem attests, but it is necessary to set realistic expectations regarding the degree to which survival might be changed as a result of human actions.
- To the extent possible, determine the range of options for modifying the human-caused mortality in each life stage. This is a mixture of policy and science, as the range of options theoretically could extend from stopping a small timber sale to removing mainstem dams. It is basically a second step of the "feasibility" analysis called for by CRI.
- Make two hard policy decisions: a) what is the level of risk to endangered salmonids that is consistent with legal and policy responsibilities and, b) out of the range of potential options for modifying human activities, what is the most appropriate mixture for achieving an acceptable level of risk?
- Once these analyses and decisions have been made, it is a relatively easy task to move in a "top-down" manner from the population-level requirements and general allocations of change expected in each category of human activity to progressively finer levels of detail for specific performance standards.

Where would this group like to go from here, in terms of obtaining state and tribal comments? Toole asked. As I said, NMFS would like to turn out another draft of this report within the next week or two; to that end, we would like to get any comments you might have by next week. Boyce suggested that Toole contact the state and tribal PATH participants, because they would be in the best position to provide the kind of feedback that is needed.

Jim Litchfield commended NMFS on this report; I think this is a good start, he said, I like where you're heading with this, and I agree that the top-down approach is appropriate. However, it doesn't go very far into some of the management implications of performance standards, and how they

would actually be applied – perhaps you can do some additional thinking about that, and add a section to the report. We have been thinking about that, said Toole, but that issue will be addressed primarily in the All-H Paper and the BiOp.

Jim Ruff commented that the actions that are contemplated in any of the Hs have to be feasible. In addition, said Ruff, we need to know who is accountable for the success of those actions; that, in turn, implies that we have to be able to measure the success of those actions. That means we have to set standards that can be readily measured through monitoring and evaluation, he said – it doesn't do any good to set a standard that can't be measured.

Bob Heinith said the tribes are planning to meet with NMFS and the operating agencies on this issue; from the tribal perspective, there are some major policy issues in this report. Are we talking about museum stocks, or harvestable stocks that support tribal treaty rights? he asked. Also, with respect to the idea that NMFS will be deciding what is and is not feasible, it seems to me that NMFS basically has to make the call about what is necessary to recover these fish, and leave the question of feasibility to the God Squad or another entity. The other concern is the bottom-up vs. the top-down approach, Heinith said; the tribes will be advocating a bottom-up approach for many of these stocks, while this report recommends a top-down approach. Is that going to be built into the Biological Opinion? Heinith asked. We're going to push this as far as we can in the Biological Opinion, Brown replied; we're still working to release the draft BiOp by May 22.

In response to a question from Boyce, Brown said the states and tribes will have an opportunity to provide their input on the contents of the draft Biological Opinion at the May IT meeting and in a series of meetings with individual stakeholders between now and May 22. And once the draft is issued, what kind of a comment period is NMFS contemplating? Jim Nielsen asked. Our regulations do not provide for any review of draft Biological Opinions, Brown replied. The reason NMFS issues draft Biological Opinions, even though, under our regulations, there is no such thing, is the fact that these are very complex issues, there is a lot of focus and interest in these issues, and there is a history of working cooperatively with the other salmon managers to address these issues, Brown said. There is also a requirement in the Endangered Species Act that we use the best available information; given all of those factors, NMFS feels that it is appropriate to share what we're about to do with the state and tribal managers who share jurisdiction over these species, Brown said. The bottom line is, we will share the draft BiOp with the region before it is finalized, but that's the best I can do, Brown said.

Litchfield suggested that the IT place a discussion of BiOp issues on the agenda of its May and June meetings. I think that's a good idea, Brown agreed.

V. Review of Operational Information for the Hydro Biological Opinion.

Ruff said the main goal of today's presentation is to get a sense of peoples' priorities on spill for juvenile fish passage at the eight FCRPS projects – basically, he said, we're interested in your

feedback. He said several documents relevant to this subject are available: the Biological Effects Team report, which outlines some of the relative survival improvements expected from the various passage actions; the BPA hydroregulation modeling results, and the BPA Transmission Business Line analysis of potential transmission system impacts due to the implementation of additional spill. These documents are attached as Enclosure H.

Beginning with the Snake River projects, Ruff said Lower Monumental Dam is at the top of NMFS' passage improvements priority list, due to the relatively low survival rate at that project in comparison with the other Snake River dams. One way to get that survival improvement is additional spill; NMFS is looking at the provision of 24-hour spill up to the spill cap at Lower Monumental. We're also looking at various capital construction projects at Lower Monumental, said Ruff; the lower survival at that project is due to the fact that Lower Monumental does not have extended-length screens, and also to the fact that there are bypass outfall problems at that project.

At Lower Granite, said Ruff, we're looking at how a surface bypass may fit in; 2000 is the last year of testing for the powerhouse surface bypass collector at that project. In future years, he said, we're also going to be looking at an overflow weir at Lower Granite. In terms of spill, we're discussing a range of options, everything from current spill operations (night spill only) to 24-hour spill up to the gas cap. The same spill options are under consideration at Little Goose Dam, Ruff added. At Ice Harbor, he said, we're already spilling up to the gas cap 24 hours per day; we're not planning to change that operation.

Moving on to spill at McNary, Ruff said NMFS is not proposing any change to the current program (12-hour spill up to the gas cap), because McNary has the highest survival of any project in the lower river. At The Dalles, which has the lowest project survival in the system, NMFS is proposing to reduce the spill volume, based on the ISAB report and survival study results from the past several years. We're considering a constant spill level of somewhere between 30% and 40% around the clock at McNary, said Ruff, with an evaluation of survival through all passage routes.

At John Day, NMFS is leaning toward recommending either a constant daytime spill level of 30%, or a 0-30% spill test in alternating blocks. At Bonneville, NMFS is proposing to increase daytime spill up to the gas cap, 120 Kcfs-150 Kcfs. In previous years, adult fallback concerns limited daytime spill at Bonneville to 75 Kcfs; we will use radio-tagged adults to evaluate the impacts of the increased spill on adult passage this year, Ruff said.

So does the IT have any feedback on relative priorities for the spill program, particularly for The Dalles and John Day? Ruff asked. A flat 30% would be nice for John Day, Heinith replied. I think this is good work, said Litchfield, although I need to study it a little more before I can tell what it really means.

The group also discussed flow issues; in particular, the ongoing debate, in TMT, on the relative

priority of storage project refill vs. spring flow augmentation. In response to a question from Litchfield, Ruff said NMFS is not planning to propose any changes to the existing BiOp flow targets. We are, however, going to propose a measure of success, by keeping track of how often those flow targets are met, he said – our goal is to meet those targets more frequently. We will also be emphasizing, clearly, that summer flow augmentation is a higher priority than spring flow augmentation, which is why we want the storage projects full by June 30, Ruff said.

VI. Review of the Scope of the Regional Forum in the Post-2000 Period.

Brown said the IT, the SCT and the TMT have all been discussing the need for process changes or changes in scope in the post-2000 period. As we continue to develop performance measures, he said, and as we continue to hear what isn't working in the in-season management process, we're looking at some potential changes to that process. To that end, said Brown, I would be very interested to hear what people feel is working, what is not working, and what needs to be improved.

The federal agencies are in agreement that we could do a better job of annual planning, as well as long-term planning, said Brown. We've talked about developing a five-year plan, comparable to the SCT model. If we were able to do that, that raises some questions about meeting frequency; maybe we would need to check in every spring and summer, but we've been hearing a lot of complaints about the current in-season management process, and the need for weekly TMT meetings. He asked anyone with comments on this topic to call or e-mail him, Ruff or Paul Wagner.

Basically, said Brown, the subject of scope is coming up for discussion; frankly, given the growing emphasis on the non-hydro Hs, you can probably expect the federal caucus or the Columbia Basin Forum to play more of a role in the future. I think that would be a positive change, said Litchfield; we've been so focused on the hydro "H" that we may have missed some opportunities in the other Hs. Heinith commented that he would approach such a change in scope cautiously; the other Hs do have an effect, he said, but the hydrosystem is the cause of most of our problems. Personally, I hate to see a major shift away from the hydro "H," because that's where the real problem is, and that's where we need to stay focused.

VII. Next IT Meeting and Agenda Items.

The next meeting of the Implementation Team was set for Wednesday, May 3, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at NMFS' Portland offices. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.